



# **Pennsylvania's future depends on our children.**

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## **Increased investments in early care and education will benefit children, families, schools and communities statewide**

All of Pennsylvania will benefit from a budget that:

### **1. Supports growth in our current pre-k programs.**

- ▶ Approximately 53,000 Pennsylvania 3- and 4- year-olds benefit from public investments in high-quality pre-k, leaving more than 125,000 children (70%) from low- to -moderate-incomes without high-quality, publicly funded pre-k.

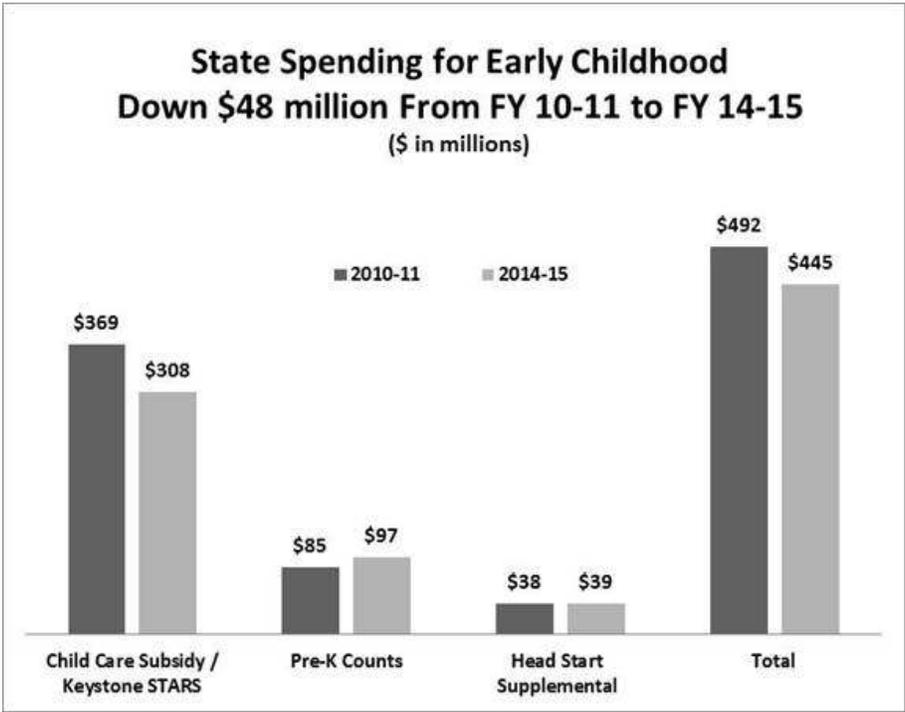
### **2. Invests more in high quality care, to assure maximum return on investment.**

- ▶ Invest more in Keystone STARS/Rising Stars, the state's continuous quality improvement program, so that government funding comes closer to covering the true cost of quality care. In addition to tiered subsidies for quality providers, the program provides essential professional development, technical assistance, grants for needed upgrades, and incentives that reduce staff turnover. \$11.5 million will result in nearly 2,200 additional children benefitting from high-quality child care.
- ▶ Reinststate a fair child care reimbursement system by lifting the rate freeze that unfairly penalizes experienced child care programs serving children of low-income working parents. The cost of lifting the 2009 rate freeze is \$28 million.
- ▶ Build on efforts to support the early childhood workforce getting the higher education and credentials they need to provide high quality care. The state must fully fund the Rising STARS Tuition Assistance Program and Keystone Stars awards.

# The vast majority of voters want strong public funding for pre-k to ensure children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Pennsylvania’s public investments in early childhood programs serve only a small portion of the children at risk for school failure.<sup>2</sup>

An increased investment now would save much more money later by reducing special education and criminal justice costs and increasing employment and tax contributions from successful school graduates.<sup>3</sup>



The Pennsylvania state budget maintains access to high quality pre-k for only 1 in 6 (18%) 3- and 4-year-olds. It relies on federal funds to subsidize the cost of care for low-income working parents — but still makes \$48 million less in state funds available for FY 2014-15 than in 2011.

Notes

- 1 November 2013 Bellwether Lake Research and Consulting Poll of likely voters in 2014 Governor’s race.
- 2 The Governor’s 10% increase for PreK Counts would still serve only 7.5% of eligible children – just 1% more than when he took office. Even with the increase in federal dollars, subsidies would serve fewer children than in 2011.
- 3 Heckman, J. J. (2011). *The Economics of Inequality*. American Educator, 31.
- 4 Steve Barnett, *Getting the Facts Right on PreK and the President’s Proposal*, National Institute of Early Education Research, 2013. Analysis of major research on long term effects of quality early education.